

MADAME DE STAEL'S TEN YEARS' EXILE.*

[This production consists of fragments of Memoirs, which M. de Stael had intended to complete at her leisure, and which would probably have undergone alterations, if a longer life had been allowed her to revise and finish them. The narrative begins in 1800, two years previous to her first exile, and stops at 1804, after the death of M. Necker. It recommences, in 1810, and breaks off abruptly at her arrival in Sweden, in the autumn of 1812. Many of the circumstances, though trifling, are too curious to be neglected, at the same time M. de Staël was an intriguing politician and wrote as a partizan with womanish feeling.]

CAUSES OF BONAPARTE'S ANIMOSITY AGAINST ME.

THE Emperor Napoleon, whose character exhibits itself entire in every action of his life, has persecuted me with a minute anxiety, with an ever-increasing activity, with an inflexible rudeness; and my connections with him contributed to make him known to me, long before Europe had discovered the key of the enigma.

Shortly after the 18th Brumaire, Bonaparte had heard that I had been speaking strongly in my own parties, against that dawning oppression, whose progress I foresaw as clearly as if the future had been revealed to me. Joseph Bonaparte, whose understanding and conversation I liked very much, came to see me, and told me, "My brother complains of you. Why, said he to me yesterday, why does not Madame de Staël attach herself to my government? what is it she wants? the payment of the deposit of her father? I will give orders for it: a residence in Paris? I will allow it her. In short, what is it she wishes?" "Good God!" replied I, "it is not what I wish, but what I think, that is in question." I know not if this answer was reported to him, but if it was, I am certain that he attached no meaning to it; for he believes in the sincerity of no one's opinions; he considers every kind of morality as nothing more than a form,

to which no more meaning is attached than to the conclusion of a letter; and as the having assured any one that you are his most humble servant would not entitle him to ask any thing of you, so if any one says that he is a lover of liberty,—that he believes in God,—that he prefers his conscience to his interest, Bonaparte considers such professions only as an adherence to custom, or as the regular means of forwarding ambitious views or selfish calculations.

HER BANISHMENT.

Madame Recamier, so celebrated for her beauty, and whose character is even expressed in her beauty, proposed to me to come and live at her country seat at St. Brice, at two leagues from Paris. I accepted her offer, for I had no idea that I could thereby injure a person so much a stranger to political affairs; I believed her protected against every thing, notwithstanding the generosity of her character. I found collected there a most delightful society, and there I enjoyed for the last time, all that I was about to quit. It was during this stormy period of my existence, that I received the speech of Mr. Mackintosh; there I read those pages, where he gives us the portrait of a jacobin, who had made himself an object of terror during the revolution to children, women and old men, and who is now bending himself double under the rod of the Corsican, who ravishes from him, even to the last atom of that liberty, for which he pretended to have taken arms. This *morceau* of the finest eloquence touched me to my very soul; it is the privilege of superior writers sometimes, unwittingly, to solace the unfortunate in all countries, and all times. France was in a state of such complete silence around me, that this voice, which suddenly responded to my soul, seemed to me to come down from heaven; it came from a land of liberty. After having passed a few days with Madame Recamier, without hearing

* Ten Years' Exile; or, Memoirs of that interesting period of the Life of the Baroness de Stael Holstein, written by herself. And now first published from the original Manuscript, by her Son.

my banishment at all spoken of, I persuaded myself that Bonaparte had renounced it. Nothing is more common than to tranquillize ourselves against a threatened danger, when we see no symptoms of it around us. I felt so little disposition to enter into any hostile plan of action against this man, that I thought it impossible for him not to leave me in peace; and after some days longer, I returned to my own country seat, satisfied that he had adjourned his resolution against me, and was contented with having frightened me. In truth I had been sufficiently so, not to make me change my opinion, or oblige me to deny it, but to repress completely that remnant of republican habit which had led me the year before, to speak with too much openness.

I was at table with three of my friends, in a room which commanded a view of the high road, and the entrance gate; it was now the end of September. At four o'clock, a man in a brown coat, on horseback, stops at the gate and rings: I was then certain of my fate. He asked for me, and I went to receive him in the garden. In walking towards him, the perfume of the flowers, and the beauty of the sun particularly struck me. How different are the sensations which affect us from the combinations of society, from those of nature! This man informed me, that he was the commandant of the gendarmerie of Versailles, but that his orders were to go out of uniform, that he might not alarm me; he shewed me a letter signed by Bonaparte, which contained the order to banish me to forty leagues distance from Paris, with an injunction to make me depart within four and twenty hours; at the same time to treat me with all the respect due to a lady of distinction. He pretended to consider me as a foreigner, and as such subject to the police: this respect for individual liberty did not last long, as very soon afterwards, other Frenchmen and Frenchwomen were banished without any form of trial. I told the gendarme officer, that to depart within twenty-four hours, might be convenient to conscripts, but not to a woman and children, and in consequence, I proposed

to him to accompany me to Paris, where I had occasion to pass three days to make the necessary arrangements for my journey. I got into my carriage with my children and this officer, who had been selected for this occasion, as the most literary of the gendarmes. In truth, he began complimenting me upon my writings. "You see," said I to him, "the consequences of being a woman of intellect, and I would recommend you, if there is occasion, to dissuade any females of your family from attempting it." I endeavoured to keep up my spirits by boldness, but I felt the barb in my heart.

JOSEPH BONAPARTE.

On the eve of the last day which was granted me, Joseph Bonaparte made one more effort in my favour; and his wife, who is a lady of the most perfect sweetness and simplicity, had the kindness to come and propose to me to pass a few days at her country seat at Morfontaine. I accepted her invitation most gratefully, for I could not but feel sensibly affected at the goodness of Joseph, who received me in his own house, at the very time I was the object of his brother's persecution. I passed three days there, and notwithstanding the perfect politeness of the master and mistress of the house, felt my situation very painfully. I saw only men connected with the government, and breathed only the air of that authority which had declared itself my enemy; and yet the simplest rules of politeness and gratitude forbid me from shewing what I felt. I had only my eldest son with me, who was then too young for me to converse with him on such subjects. I passed whole hours in examining the gardens of Morfontaine, among the finest that could be seen in France, and the possessor of which, then tranquil, appeared to me really an object of envy. He has been since exiled upon thrones, where I am sure he has often regretted his beautiful retreat.

FEMALE TRAPPIST.

We reached the convent in the midst of a severe shower, after having been obliged to come nearly a mile on foot. As we were flattering ourselves with being admitted, the *Procureur* of la Trappe, who has the direction of the

female convent, told us that nobody could be received there. I tried, however, to ring the bell at the gate of the cloister; a nun appeared behind the latticed opening through which the portress may speak to strangers. "What do you want?" said she to me, in a voice without modulation, as we might suppose that of a ghost. "I should wish to see the interior of your convent."—"That is impossible."—"But I am very wet, and want to dry myself."—She immediately touched a spring which opened the door of an outer apartment, in which I was allowed to rest myself, but no living creature appeared. I had hardly been seated a few minutes, when becoming impatient at being unable to penetrate into the interior of the house, I rung again; the same person again appeared, and I asked her if no females were ever admitted into the convent; she answered that it was only in cases when any one had the intention of becoming a nun. "But," said I to her, "how can I know if I wish to remain in your house, if I am not permitted to examine it?"—"Oh, that is quite useless," replied she, "I am very sure that you have no vocation for our state," and with these words immediately shut her wicket. I know not by what signs this nun had satisfied herself of my worldly dispositions; it is possible that a quick manner of speaking, so different from theirs, is sufficient to make them distinguish travellers who are merely curious. The hour of vespers approaching, I could go into the church to hear the nuns sing; they were behind a black close grating, through which nothing could be seen. You only heard the noise of their wooden shoes, and of the wooden benches as they raised them to sit down. Their singing had nothing of sensibility in it, and I thought I could remark both by their manner of praying, and in their conversation which I had afterwards with the father Trappist, who directed them, that it was not religious enthusiasm, such as we conceive it, but severe and grave habits which could support such a kind of life. The tenderness of piety would even exhaust the strength; a sort of ruggedness of soul is necessary to so rude an existence.

The new Father Abbé of the Trappists, settled in the vallies of the Canton of Fribourg, has added to the austerities of the order. One can have no idea of the minute degrees of suffering imposed upon the monks; they go so far as even to forbid them, when they have been standing for some hours in succession, from leaning against the wall, or wiping the perspiration from their forehead; in short every moment of their life is filled with suffering, as the people of the world fill theirs with enjoyment. They rarely live to be old, and those to whom this lot falls, regard it as a punishment from heaven. Such an establishment would be barbarous if any one was compelled to enter it, or if there was the least concealment of what they suffer there. But on the contrary, they distribute to whoever wishes to read it, a printed statement, in which the rigours of the order are rather exaggerated than softened; and yet there are novices who are willing to take the vows, and those who are received never run away, although they might do it without the least difficulty. The whole rests, as it appears to me, upon the powerful idea of death; the institutions and amusements of society are destined in the world to turn our thoughts entirely upon life: but when the contemplation of death gets a certain hold of the human heart, joined to a firm belief in the immortality of the soul, there are no bounds to the disgust which it may take to every thing which forms a subject of interest in the world; and a state of suffering appearing the road to a future life, such minds follow it with avidity, like the traveller, who willingly fatigues himself, in order to get sooner over the road which leads him to the object of his wishes. But what equally astonished and grieved me, was to see children brought up with this severity: their poor locks shaved off, their young countenances already furrowed, that deathly dress with which they were covered before they knew any thing of life, before they had voluntarily renounced it, all this made my soul revolt against the parents who had placed them there. When such a state is not the adoption of a free and determined

choice on the part of the person who professes it, it inspires as much horror as it at first created respect. The monk with whom I conversed, spoke of nothing but death; all his ideas came from that subject, or connected themselves with it; death is the sovereign monarch of this residence. As we talked of the temptations of the world, I expressed to the father Trappist my admiration of his conduct in thus sacrificing all, to withdraw himself from their influence. "We are cowards," said he to me, "who have retired into a fortress, because we feel we want the courage to meet our enemy in the open field." This reply was equally modest and ingenious.

POLAND.

The Poles love their country as an unfortunate friend: the country is dull and monotonous, the people ignorant and lazy; they have always wished for liberty; they have never known how to acquire it. But the Poles think that they can and may govern Poland, and the feeling is very natural. The education however of the people is so much neglected, and all kind of industry so foreign to them, that the Jews have possessed themselves of the entire trade, and make the peasants sell them for a quantity of brandy the whole harvest of the approaching year. The distance between the nobility and the peasantry is so immense, the contrast between the luxury of the one, and the frightful misery of the other, is so shocking, that it is probable the Austrians have given them better laws than those which previously existed. At every post-house in Galicia there are to be seen three descriptions of persons who gather round travellers' carriages: the Jew traders, the Polish beggars, and the German spies. The country appears exclusively inhabited by these three classes of men. The beggars, with their long beards, and ancient Sarmatian costume, excite deep commiseration; it is very true that if they would work they need not be in that state; but I know not whether it is pride or laziness which makes them disdain the culture of the enslaved earth.

You meet upon the high roads processions of men and women carrying

the standard of the cross, and singing psalms; a profound expression of melancholy reigns upon their countenances: I have seen them, when not money, but food of a better sort than they had been accustomed to was given them, turn up their eyes to heaven with astonishment, as if they considered themselves unfit to enjoy its bounty. The custom of the common people in Poland is to embrace the knees of the nobility when they meet them; you cannot stir a step in a village without having the women, children, and old men saluting you in this manner. In the midst of this spectacle of wretchedness you might see some men in shabby attire, who were spies upon misery: for that was the only object which could offer itself to their eyes. The captains of the circles refused passports to the Polish noblemen, for fear they should see one another, or lest they should go to Warsaw. They obliged these noblemen to appear before them every eight days, in order to certify their presence. The Austrians thus proclaimed in all manner of ways that they knew they were detested in Poland, and they separated their troops into two equal divisions: the first entrusted with supporting *externally* the interests of Poland, and the second employed in the *interior* to prevent the Poles from aiding the same cause. I do not believe that any country was ever more wretchedly governed than Galicia was at that time, at least under political considerations; and it was apparently to conceal this spectacle from general observation that so many difficulties were made in allowing a stranger to reside in, or even to pass through the country.

KIOW.

Determined to continue my journey through Russia, I proceeded towards Kiow, the principal city of the Ukraine, and formerly of all Russia, for this empire began by fixing its capital in the South. The Russians had then continual communication with the Greeks established at Constantinople, and in general with the people of the East, whose habits they have adopted in a variety of instances. The Ukraine is a very fertile country, but by no means

agreeable; you see large plains of wheat which appear to be cultivated by invisible hands, the habitations and inhabitants are so rare. You must not expect, in approaching Kiow, or the greater part of what are called cities in Russia, to find any thing resembling the cities of the West; the roads are not better kept, nor do country houses indicate a more numerous population. On my arrival at Kiow, the first object that met my eyes was a cemetery, and this was the first indication to me of being near a place where men were collected. The houses at Kiow generally resemble tents, and at a distance the city appears like a camp; I could not help fancying that the moveable residences of the Tartars had furnished models for the construction of those wooden houses, which have not a much greater appearance of solidity. A few days are sufficient for building them; they are very often consumed by fire, and an order is sent to the forest for a house, as you would send to market to lay in your winter stock of provisions. In the midst of these huts, however, palaces have been erected, and a number of churches, whose green and gilt cupolas singularly draw the attention. When towards the evening the sun darts his rays on these brilliant domes, you would fancy that it was rather an illumination for a festival, than a durable edifice.

The Russians never pass a church without making the sign of the cross, and their long beards add greatly to the religious expression of their physiognomy. They generally wear a large blue robe, fastened round the waist by a scarlet band; the dresses of the women have also something Asiatic in them; and one remarks that taste for lively colours which we derive from the East, where the sun is so beautiful, that one likes to make his eclat more conspicuous by the objects which he shines upon. I speedily contracted such a partiality to these oriental dresses, that I could not bear to see Russians dressed like other Europeans, they seemed

to me then entering into that great regularity of the despotism of Napoleon, which first makes all nations a present of the conscription, then of the war-taxes, and lastly, of the Code Napoleon, in order to govern in the same manner, nations of totally different characters.

The Dnieper, which the ancients called Borysthenes, passes by Kiow, and the old tradition of the country affirms, that it was a boat-man, who in crossing it found its waters so pure that he was led to found a town on its banks. In fact, the rivers are the most beautiful natural objects in Russia. It would be difficult to find any small streams, their course would be so much obstructed by the sand. There is scarcely any variety of trees; the melancholy birch is incessantly recurring in this uninvective nature; even the want of stones might be almost regretted, so much is the eye sometimes fatigued with meeting neither hill nor valley, and to be always making progress without encountering new objects. The rivers relieve the imagination from this fatigue; the priests, therefore, bestow their benedictions on these rivers. The emperor, empress, and the whole court attend the ceremony of the benediction of the Neva, at the moment of the severest cold of winter. It is said that Wladimir, at the commencement of the eleventh century, declared, that all the waters of the Borysthenes were holy, and that plunging in them was sufficient to make a man a Christian; the baptism of the Greeks being performed by immersion, millions of men went into this river to abjure their idolatry. It was this same Wladimir who sent deputies to different countries, to learn which of all the religions it best suited him to adopt; he decided for the Greek ritual, on account of the pomp of its ceremonies. Perhaps also he preferred it for more important reasons; in fact the Greek faith by excluding the papal power, gives the sovereign of Russia the spiritual and temporal power united.

The Greek religion is necessarily less intolerant than the Roman Catholic; for being itself reproached as a schism, it can hardly complain of heretics; all religions therefore are admitted into Russia, and from the borders of the Don to those of the Neva, the fraternity of country unites men, even though their theological opinions may separate them. The Greek priests are allowed to marry, and scarcely any gentleman embraces this profession: it follows that the clergy has very little political ascendancy; it acts upon the people, but it is very submissive to the emperor.

The ceremonies of the Greek worship are at least as beautiful as those of the catholics; the church music is heavenly; every thing in this worship leads to meditation; it has something of poetry and feeling about it, but it appears better adapted to captivate the imagination than to regulate the conduct. When the priest comes out of the sanctuary, in which he remains shut up while he communicates, you would say that you saw the gates of light opening; the cloud of incense which surrounds him, the gold and silver, and precious stones, which glitter on his robes and in the church, seem to come from countries where the sun is an object of adoration. The devout sentiments which are inspired by gothic architecture in Germany, France, and England, cannot be at all compared with the effect of the Greek churches; they rather remind us of the minarets of the Turks and Arabs than of our churches. As little must we expect to find, as in Italy, the splendour of the fine arts; their most remarkable ornaments are virgins and saints crowned with rubies and diamonds. Magnificence is the character of every thing one sees in Russia; neither the genius of man nor the gifts of nature constitute its beauties.

The ceremonies of marriage, of baptism, and of burial, are noble and affecting; we find in them some ancient customs of Grecian idolatry, but only those which, having no connection with doctrine, can add to the impression of the three great scenes of life, birth,

marriage, and death. The Russian peasants still continue the custom of addressing the dead previous to a final separation from his remains. Why is it, say they, that thou hast abandoned us? Wert thou then unhappy on this earth? Was not thy wife fair and good? Why therefore hast thou left her? The dead replies not, but the value of existence is thus proclaimed in the presence of those who still preserve it.

THE RUSSIAN PEOPLE.

I reached at last that part of my road which removed me from the theatre of war, and arrived in the governments of Orel and Toulá, which have been so much talked of since, in the bulletins of the two armies. I was received in these solitary abodes, for so the provincial towns in Russia appear, with the most perfect hospitality. Several gentlemen of the neighbourhood came to my inn to compliment me on my writings, and I confess having been flattered to find that my literary reputation had extended to this distance from my native country. The lady of the governor received me in the Asiatic style, with sherbet and roses; her apartment was elegantly furnished with musical instruments and pictures. In Europe you see every where the contrast of wealth and poverty; but in Russia it may be said that neither one nor the other makes itself remarked. The people are not poor; the great know how to lead, when it is necessary, the same life as the people: it is the mixture of the hardest privations and of the most refined enjoyments which characterizes the country. These same noblemen, whose residence unites all that the luxury of different parts of the world has most attractive, live, while they are travelling, on much worse food than our French peasantry, and know how to bear, not only during war, but in various circumstances of life, a physical existence of the most disagreeable kind. The severity of the climate, the marshes, the forests, the deserts, of which a great part of the country is composed, place man in a continual struggle with nature. Fruits, and even flowers, only grow in hot-houses; vegetables are not generally cultivated;

and there are no vines any where. The habitual mode of life of the French peasants could not be obtained in Russia but at a very great expense. There they have only necessaries by luxury : whence it happens that when luxury is unattainable, even necessaries are renounced. What the English call *comforts* are hardly to be met with in Russia. You will never find any thing sufficiently perfect to satisfy in all ways the imagination of the great Russian nobleman ; but when this poetry of wealth fails them, they drink hydromel, sleep upon a board, and travel day and night in an open carriage, without regretting the luxury to which one would think they had been habituated. It is rather as magnificence that they love fortune, than from the pleasures they derive from it : resembling still in that point the Easterns, who exercise hospitality to strangers, load them with presents, and yet frequently neglect the every-day comforts of their own life. This is one of the reasons which explains that noble courage with which the Russians have supported the ruin which has been occasioned them by the burning of Moscow. More accustomed to external pomp than to the care of themselves they are not mollified by luxury, and the sacrifice of money satisfies their pride as much or more than the magnificence of their expenditure. What characterizes this people, is something gigantic of all kinds : ordinary dimensions are not at all applicable to it. I do not by that mean to say that neither real grandeur or stability are to be met with in it : but the boldness and the imagination of the Russians know no bounds : with them every thing is colossal rather than well proportioned, audacious rather than reflective, and if they do not hit the mark it is because they overshoot it.

I was always advancing nearer to Moscow, but nothing yet indicated the approach to a capital. The wooden villages were equally distant from each other, we saw no greater movement upon the immense plains which are called high roads ; you heard no more noise ; the country houses were not more numerous : there is so much space in Russia that every thing is lost in it,

even the chateaux, even the population. You might suppose you were travelling through a country from which the people had just taken their departure. The absence of birds adds to this silence ; cattle also are rare, or at least they are placed at a great distance from the road. Extent makes every thing disappear, except extent itself, like certain ideas in metaphysics, of which the mind can never get rid, when it has once seized them.

MOSCOW.

Gilded cupolas announced Moscow from afar ; however, as the surrounding country is only a plain, as well as the whole of Russia, you may arrive in that great city without being struck with its extent. It has been well said by some one, that Moscow was rather a province than a city. In fact, you there see huts, houses, palaces, a bazar as in the East, churches, public buildings, pieces of water, woods, and parks. The variety of manners, and of the nations of which Russia is composed, are all exhibited in this immense residence. Will you, I was asked, buy some Cashmere shawls in the Tartar quarter ? Have you seen the Chinese town ? Asia and Europe are found united in this immense city. There is more liberty enjoyed in it than at Petersburg, where the court necessarily exercises great influence. The great nobility settled at Moscow were not ambitious of places ; but they proved their patriotism by munificent gifts to the state, either for public establishments during peace, or as aids during the war. The colossal fortunes of the great Russian nobility are employed in making collections of all kinds, and in enterprises of which the Arabian Nights have given the models ; these fortunes are also frequently lost by the unbridled passions of their possessors.

When I arrived at Moscow, nothing was talked of but the sacrifices that were made on account of the war. A young Count de Momonoff raised a regiment for the state, and would only serve in it as a sub-lieutenant ; a Countess Orloff, amiable and wealthy in the Asiatic style, gave the fourth of her income. As I was passing before these palaces surrounded by gardens, where

space was thrown away in a city as elsewhere in the middle of the country, I was told that the possessor of this superb residence had given a thousand peasants to the state : and of that, two hundred. I had some difficulty in accommodating myself to the expression, *giving men*, but the peasants themselves offered their services with ardour, and the lords were in this war only their interpreters.

As soon as a Russian becomes a soldier, his beard is cut off, and from that moment he is free. A desire was felt that all those who might have served in the militia should also be considered as free : but in that case the nation would have been entirely so, for it rose almost *en masse*. Let us hope that this so much-desired emancipation may be effected without violence : but in the mean time one would wish to have the beards preserved, so much strength and dignity do they add to the physiognomy. The Russians with long beards never pass a church without making the sign of the cross, and their confidence in the visible images of religion is very affecting. Their churches bear the mark of that taste for luxury which they have from Asia : you see in them only ornaments of gold, and silver, and rubies. I was told that a Russian had proposed to form an alphabet with precious stones, and to write a Bible in that manner. He knew the best manner of interesting the imaginations of the Russians in what they read. This imagination, however, has not as yet manifested itself either in the fine arts or in poetry. They reach a certain point in all things very quickly, and do not go beyond that. Impulse makes them take the first steps ; but the second belong to reflection, and these Russians, who have nothing in common with the people of the North, are as yet very little capable of meditation.

Several of the palaces of Moscow are of wood, in order that they may be built quicker, and that the natural inconstancy of the nation, in every thing unconnected with country or religion, may be satisfied by an easy change of residence. Several of these fine edifices have been constructed for an entertainment ; they were destined to add to

the eclat of a day, and the rich manner in which they were decorated ; has made them last up to this period of universal destruction. A great number of houses are painted green, yellow, or rose colour, and are sculptured in detail like desert ornaments.

THE KREMLIN.

The citadel of the Kremlin, in which the Emperors of Russia defended themselves against the Tartars, is surrounded by a high wall, embattled and flanked with turrets, which, by their odd shapes, remind one of a Turkish minaret rather than a fortress like those of the West of Europe. But although the external character of the buildings of the city be oriental, the impression of Christianity was found in that multitude of churches so much venerated, and which attracted your notice at every step. One was reminded of Rome in seeing Moscow ; certainly not from the monuments being of the same style, but because the mixture of solitary and country and magnificent palaces, the grandeur of the city and the infinite number of its churches give the Asiatic Rome some points of resemblance to the European Rome.

It was about the beginning of August, that I was allowed to see the interior of the Kremlin ; I got there by the same staircase which the Emperor Alexander had ascended a few days preceding, surrounded by an immense people, who loaded him with their blessings, and promised him to defend his empire at all hazards. This people has kept its word. The halls were first thrown open to me in which the arms of the ancient warriors of Russia are contained ; the arsenals of this kind, in other parts of Europe, are much more interesting. The Russians have taken no part in the times of chivalry ; they never mingled in the Crusades. Constantly at war with the Tartars, Poles, and Turks, the military spirit has been formed among them in the midst of the atrocities of all kinds brought in the train of Asiatic nations, and of the tyrants who governed Russia. It is not therefore the generous bravery of the Bayards or of the Percys, but the intrepidity of a fanatical courage which has been exhibited in this country for

several centuries. The Russians, in the relations of society, which are so new to them, are not distinguished by the spirit of chivalry, such as the people of the West conceive it: but they have always shown themselves terrible to their enemies. So many massacres have taken place in the interior of Russia, up to the reign of Peter the Great, and even later, that the morality of the nation, and particularly that of the great nobility, must have suffered severely from them. These despotic governments, whose sole restraint is the assassination of the despot, overthrow all principles of honour and duty in the minds of men: but the love of their country and an attachment to their religious creed have been maintained in their full strength, amidst the wrecks of this bloody history, and the nation which preserves such virtues may yet astonish the world.

From the ancient arsenal I was conducted into the apartments formerly occupied by the czars, and in which the robes are preserved which they wore on the day of their coronation. These apartments have no sort of beauty, but they agreed very well with the hard life which the czars led and still lead. The greatest magnificence reigns in the palace of Alexander; but he himself sleeps on the floor, and travels like a Cossack officer.

The commercial establishments at Moscow had quite an Asiatic character; men in turbans, and others dressed in the different costumes of all the people of the East, exhibited the rarest merchandize: the furs of Siberia and the muslins of India there offered all the enjoyments of luxury to those great noblemen whose imagination is equally pleased with the sables of the Samoièdes, and with the rubies of the Persians.

ST. PETERSBURG.

From Novogorod to Petersburg, you see scarcely any thing but marshes, and you arrive in one of the finest cities in the world, as if, with a magic wand, an enchanter had made all the wonders of Europe and Asia start up from the middle of the deserts. The foundation of Petersburg offers the greatest proof of

that ardour of Russian will, which recognizes nothing as impossible; every thing in the environs is humble, the city is built upon a marsh, and even the marble rests on piles; but you forget when looking at these superb edifices, their frail foundations, and cannot help meditating on the miracle of so fine a city being built in so short a time.

On my arrival at Petersburg my first sentiment was to return thanks to heaven for being on the borders of the sea.

It is said, and properly, that you cannot, at Petersburg, say of a woman, that she is as old as the streets, the streets themselves are so modern. The buildings still possess a dazzling whiteness, and at night when they are lighted by the moon, they look like large white phantoms regarding, immoveable, the course of the Neva. I know not what there is particularly beautiful in this river, but the waves of no other I had yet seen ever appeared to me so limpid. A succession of granite quays, thirty versts in length, borders its course, and this magnificent labour of man is worthy of the transparent water which it adorns.

The Russian inhabitants of Petersburg have the look of a people of the South, condemned to live in the North, and making every effort to struggle with a climate at variance with their nature. The inhabitants of the North are generally very indolent, and dread the cold, precisely because he is their daily enemy. The lower classes of the Russians have none of these habits; the coachmen wait for ten hours at the gate, during winter, without complaining; they sleep upon the snow, under their carriage, and transport the manners of the Lazzaroni of Naples do the sixtieth degree of latitude. You may see them laying on the steps of staircases, like the Germans in their down; sometimes they sleep standing, with their head reclined against the wall. By turns indolent and impetuous, they give themselves up alternately to sleep, or to the most fatiguing employments. Some of them get drunk, in which they differ from the people of the South, who are very sober; but the Russians are so

also, and to an extent hardly credible, when the difficulties of war require it.

The day after my arrival I went to dine with one of the most considerable merchants of the city, who exercised hospitality *à la Russe*; that is to say, he placed a flag on the top of his house to signify that he dined at home, and this invitation was sufficient for all his friends. He made us dine in the open air, so much pleasure was felt from these poor days of summer, of which a few yet remained, to which we should have scarcely given the name in the South of Europe. The garden was very agreeable; it was embellished with trees and flowers; but at four paces from the house the deserts and the marshes were again to be seen. In the environs of Petersburg, nature has the look of an enemy who resumes his advantages, when man ceases for a moment to struggle with him.

THE IMPERIAL FAMILY.

I had at last the pleasure of seeing that monarch, equally absolute by law and custom, and so moderate from his own disposition. The Empress Elizabeth, to whom I was at first presented, appeared to me the tutelary angel of Russia. Her manners are extremely reserved, but what she says is full of life, and it is from the focus of all generous ideas that her sentiments and opinions have derived strength and warmth. While I listened to her, I was affected by something inexpressible, which did not proceed from her grandeur, but from the harmony of her soul; so long was it since I had known an instance of concord between power and virtue. As I was conversing with the empress, the door opened, and the Emperor Alexander did me the honour to come and talk with me. What first struck me in him was such an expression of goodness and dignity, that the two qualities appeared inseparable, and in him to form only one. I was also very much affected with the noble simplicity with which he entered upon the

great interests of Europe, almost among the first words he addressed to me. I have always regarded, as a proof of mediocrity, that apprehension of treating serious questions, with which the best part of the sovereigns of Europe have been inspired; they are afraid to pronounce a word to which any real meaning can be attached.

The Emperor Alexander, on the contrary, conversed with me as statesmen in England would have done, who place their strength in themselves, and not in the barriers with which they are surrounded. The Emperor Alexander, whom Napoleon has endeavoured to misrepresent, is a man of remarkable understanding and information, and I do not believe that in the whole extent of his empire he could find a minister better versed than himself in all that belongs to the judgment and direction of public affairs. He did not disguise from me his regret for the admiration to which he had surrendered himself in his intercourse with Napoleon. His grandfather had, in the same way, entertained a great enthusiasm for Frederick II. In these sort of illusions, produced by an extraordinary character, there is always a generous motive, whatever may be the errors that result from it. The Emperor Alexander, however, described with great sagacity the effect produced upon him by these conversations with Bonaparte, in which he said the most opposite things, as if one must be astonished at each, without thinking of their being contradictory. He related to me also the lessons *à la Machiavel* which Napoleon had thought proper to give him: "You see," said he, "I am careful to keep my ministers and generals at variance among themselves, in order that each may reveal to me the faults of the other; I keep around me a continual jealousy by the manner I treat those who are about me: one day one thinks himself the favourite, the next day another, so that no one is ever certain of my favour."